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# **The Communist Role in South European Labor**

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**A Research Paper**

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# **The Communist Role in South European Labor**

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**A Research Paper**

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**The Communist Role in  
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**Summary***Information available  
as of 1 December 1983  
was used in this report.*

Communist labor confederations are influential—and sometimes disruptive—forces in the economic and political affairs of southern European countries. The confederations represent large numbers of workers, and the concentration of their strength in key sectors of the economy contributes to their political power, as do close alliances with their parent Communist parties. In France and Italy, they reap the advantages and disadvantages of having become as “respectable” as their parent Communist parties; but, in the rest of southern Europe, the aim of the Communist labor confederations is to unseat and discredit the ruling socialists.

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In France, Italy, and Portugal, Communist confederations constitute the largest labor organizations; in Spain, they were only recently surpassed by the socialist union; and in Greece, they are making a strong bid for second place. This success derives in part from skillful, grassroots organizing by dedicated Communist cadres. The Communists' organizing job has been made easier by recent liberalization of labor laws in France and Italy and the legalization of trade unionism, including Communist unions, in Spain, Portugal, and Greece. Soviet Bloc funds and training have also helped, but it is difficult to gauge the precise extent of the aid or its impact.

Although the rank and file in these confederations are not necessarily Communists, high- and middle-level posts are dominated by Communist party members who exert decisive influence over union strategies and tactics. It is not surprising, therefore, that the parties and unions tend to hold congruent views on most domestic and international subjects. Communist labor leaders sometimes bridle when the party adopts policy positions primarily for political purposes without taking worker interests sufficiently into account. Disagreements have occurred most often in Italy and to a lesser extent in France, but they occasionally arise in the other countries as well. Divergent views on a given issue are resolved most often in the party's favor.

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We believe that southern Europe's Communist labor confederations are likely to hold their own against competition from socialist unions during the next few years. The French and Italian confederations will retain their preeminence despite membership losses, Spanish and Portuguese membership will remain stable, and Greek membership probably will continue to increase. The Communist parties will try to keep a tight rein on the


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confederations, and this will have advantages and disadvantages for the unions. The unions will benefit from party organization and money, but recruiting could suffer if workers think their interests are taking second place to political expediency as seems to be the case in France. Moreover, clashes between militants and moderates within the confederations could reduce their effectiveness. 

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Communist confederations will follow a mixed bag of policies. The French confederation will continue to behave moderately in deference to the Communist party's membership in government. The Italian confederation has an important socialist constituency to consider and therefore has the sometimes difficult task of promoting Communist party fortunes without undermining the Socialist-led government. The Spanish, Portuguese, and Greek confederations will become even more strident in their opposition to Socialist government policies, thus running the risk that the governments might attempt to curb their power through special legislation. 

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## The Communist Role in South European Labor

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### Introduction

The role of Communists in south European labor confederations contrasts sharply with their role in northern Europe. Northern Communists are faced with the task of infiltrating well-established socialist unions, and the influence they have managed to gain is small.<sup>1</sup> In France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece, Communists have their own labor confederations which either dominate the labor scene or are an important part of it.

The Communist confederations in the south have several characteristics in common:

- They represent substantial portions of the unionized work force—40 to 50 percent in most countries, with the possible exception of Greece—and they control key sectors of the economy.
- Communist party members are in the majority in the leadership bodies of all the labor confederations. The degree of Communist party control ranges from Portugal, where party and confederation leadership are nearly identical, to Italy, where the socialist minority in the confederation's hierarchy often succeeds in moderating the position of the Communist majority.
- Policies adopted by the Communist confederations almost always bear the imprimatur of the Communist parties. In those rare instances in which their interests diverge and there is conflict between the party and the confederation, the party's view nearly always prevails. Except in Italy, Communist labor leaders take great pains not to aggravate relations with the party.
- Like most of the Communist parties, confederations have highly centralized national structures that can impose discipline down the line. Where the party's centralized authority degenerates into factionalism, as it has in Spain, the labor confederation's authority is undermined as well.

- The confederations have tended to benefit from liberalization in labor laws. When Communist unions were legalized in Spain, Portugal, and Greece in the 1970s, the Communists moved with determination to turn their previously clandestine organizations into important contenders for labor power. The Communists' organizational talent has traditionally worked to their advantage in France and Italy, as well.

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- The Communist labor confederations have often benefited from the disunity of competing labor elements. In Portugal and Greece, moderate and conservative unions spend more energy fighting each other than fighting the Communists.
- The Soviet Union and its allies, often operating through their official trade unions, exercise influence over the Communist labor confederations in southern Europe, but there is little precise information on the extent of the ties or the amount of Soviet funding. In general, the degree of Soviet influence and involvement in the Communist labor confederations in southern Europe appears to reflect the tenor of relations between the Soviet party and the national Communist party. Ties to the Soviets thus range from close and pervasive in the case of the Greek and Portuguese confederations to tenuous in the case of the Italian grouping.<sup>2</sup>

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Apart from these common themes, the differences among Communist labor confederations are often as striking as the similarities. Accordingly, most of the

<sup>2</sup> Moscow apparently makes little attempt to coordinate the activities of Communist labor confederations in southern Europe. Only the French confederation belongs to the Moscow-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). Nor do the Communist labor confederations in southern Europe make apparent attempts to coordinate tactics or policies among themselves. Occasional meetings between confederation leaders usually result in token statements of fraternal solidarity but little more. This appears to have been true of the meetings between the heads of the Spanish and French Communist confederations in Paris in 1980, for example, and of the other meetings since then between spokesmen for the French and Portuguese confederations that dealt with the interests of Portuguese workers in France.

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rest of this paper focuses on each of the confederations in an attempt to assess its strength and to sketch the pattern of Communist party influence and its impact on confederation policies. The final section of the paper projects membership and policy trends over the next few years. [redacted]

### The Communist Presence in French Labor

The Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT), long the preeminent labor grouping in France, has been dominated by the Communists since 1946. It is the largest of the three major French trade union confederations by a wide margin, and it dominates heavy industry, including auto manufacturing, metalworking, and the paper and printing industries. Although the CGT established a foothold within French labor because of the Communist party's support, it is now the party, with its declining electoral fortunes, that benefits by its association with the CGT, which has political influence in its own right. [redacted]

Over the last several years, however, the CGT's membership has dropped. According to the confederation's own figures which, if anything, are inflated, membership fell from 2.3 million in 1977 to 1.9 million in 1980.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the social democratic Force Ouvriere (FO) has picked up strength while the strength of the socialist Confederation Francaise Democratique du Travail (CFDT) has fluctuated somewhat. Moreover, the CFDT and the FO increased their share of labor's seats on the French labor court (which has jurisdiction over all conflicts arising out of work contracts) in the triennial election for that body in 1982 at the expense of the CGT, whose share dropped from 42.4 to 36.8 percent (table 1). The smaller white-collar Confederation Generale des Cadres (CGC) and the Catholic Confederation Francaise des Travailleurs Chretiens (CFTC) gained even more. In the 1983 social security elections—which determine each confederation's share of the labor seats on local social security boards—centrist and conservative unions polled 54 percent of the vote, with 25 percent going to the FO alone. The CGT,

<sup>3</sup> Historically CGT membership figures have been inflated. When the Communists took control of the confederation just after World War II, they claimed nearly 6 million members, whereas a more accurate figure probably would have been from 10 to 40 percent less. During the 1950s and 1960s, membership figures were inflated because they failed to distinguish between dues-paying members and nominal ones. [redacted]

**Table 1**  
**French Labor Court Elections <sup>a</sup>**

	1979	1982
CGT	42.4	36.8
CFDT	23.1	23.5
FO	17.4	17.8
CFTC	6.9	8.5
CGC	5.2	9.6

<sup>a</sup> Percentage shares of total vote among major trade unions.

[redacted]  
with its 28-percent showing, remained the largest single bloc but it nonetheless suffered a net loss. It was the dominant union on social security councils in the past when they were appointed by the government. [redacted]

The confederation's difficulties suggest growing rank-and-file apathy as well as discontent with the CGT's policies and leaders. Constrained by the Communist party's participation in the government, the CGT's leadership has not opposed economic austerity measures by organizing wide-scale strikes and worker mobilization as it did during earlier periods of economic retrenchment. A more fundamental explanation for the CGT's problems may be the decline of the smokestack industries where the union has been strongest (table 2). [redacted]

Embassy and press reporting indicate that the CGT has had some success recruiting workers from North Africa, who comprise a significant part of the labor force in the manufacturing sector. With little long-term stake in France's economy and society, they have demonstrated a greater willingness than most French workers to strike and engage in industrial actions that further damage already weakened industries, such as the automobile sector. The militancy of many of these new members, however, may work against new CGT



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Table 2  
The French Confederation  
Generale du Travail (CGT)

National standing (by size)	Largest
Membership (persons)	Approximately 1.9 million (about 40 percent of unionized workers)
Influence of national Communist party on union	High
Congruence between party policy and union policy	High
Regions of notable strength	Paris and industrial suburbs, Marseilles
Sectors of dominance	Metalworking, automobiles, paper/printing, maritime/long-shoring, national railroads, Paris transport

participation by French workers, who are preoccupied with their job security and evaporating purchasing power and are less willing in the short term to associate themselves with militant labor actions.

**Patterns of Influence.** The French Communist Party (PCF) clearly dominates the CGT. Party members comprise a majority of the confederation's leadership and generally prevail in policy matters. The three secretaries general the CGT has had in the postwar period have all been members of the PCF Politbureau. The National Confederation Committee, the CGT's policymaking body between confederal congresses, is composed almost exclusively of PCF members. Through these leadership positions, which sit at the top of a highly centralized organization, the Communist party is able to control the policies of the confederation, most of whose members are not themselves Communists.

The removal of Georges Seguy as Secretary General of the CGT in 1982 is a good example of Communist party control. Party leaders apparently believed Seguy's main fault was that he was often more responsive to the wishes of other CGT colleagues than to those of the party. For example,

he tacitly supported a move by half of

**Soviet Influences in French Labor**

The CGT retains close ties to the the Soviet-backed World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) based in Prague. As the WFTU's only West European member, the CGT is highly valued. Indeed, a senior official in the international relations section of the CGT was secretary general of the WFTU in the late 1970s. With rare aberrations, such as during Seguy's tenure as head of the CGT, relations between the WFTU and the CGT mirror those between the French and Soviet Communist parties. Although details are rarely available, the CGT presumably continues to receive financial assistance from Soviet sources

the CGT has shown an intermittent interest in the last few years in encouraging a less doctrinaire outlook on the part of the WFTU leadership. We do not believe, however, that this portends a rupture between the two organizations or any weakening of CGT-Soviet ties, particularly in view of the current CGT leadership. Indeed, a leading French Communist publication earlier this year noted favorably CGT participation in East Bloc trade union conferences in the last two years, and the CGT's main journal has publicized Krasucki's denunciations of anti-Sovietism—an indirect suggestion of harmonious CGT-Soviet relations.

the CGT's overwhelmingly Communist leadership to condemn the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Seguy's replacement was his second in command, Henri Krasucki, a party hardliner whose takeover signaled to many CGT officials that the PCF would brook no opposition to its policies.

Although the constraints on the CGT arising from the PCF's participation in the government may have accelerated its loss of members, the confederation has, nevertheless, profited from the patronage power of

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Communist cabinet ministers. Disbursement of jobs in the health sector during the tenure of Communist Health Minister Ralite, for example, reflected a pro-CGT bias. Of the more than 2,000 health-related jobs created in 1981, an unusually large share went to Communist-controlled communities where the CGT is dominant among workers in the health care field. Similarly, Transportation Minister Fiterman has provided the CGT new access at the highest level of the state-run French national railroad by creating a special oversight committee, half of whose members are CGT officials. [redacted]

The CGT has also become the unintended beneficiary of some of the Mitterrand government's policies and decisions. A government decree in 1982 that trade union representatives be given more paid release time to carry out their trade union functions, for instance, is likely to be best exploited by the CGT because of its size and its large proportion of militants. In addition, since 1981 the Ministries of Labor and of Vocational Training have increased their subsidies to labor confederations by about 28 percent, with the largest amount going to the CGT because of its greater size. [redacted]

**Communist Union Policies.** On key issues, the CGT's positions almost invariably correspond with those of the Communist party, although the union lamely insists that it arrives at its decisions independently of any political party. Were the party significantly divided on a major issue (such as party leadership succession or the question of remaining in government), we believe that the split would be reflected in the CGT, and, moreover, that the faction prevailing in the party would also prevail in the confederation. In fact, however, open dissent in both party and union are rare. The overlapping hierarchies of the PCF and the CGT and their adherence to democratic centralism ensure that disagreement will be infrequent and challenges to the majority view not tolerated. [redacted]

Now that the party participates in a government that demands sacrifices and austerity of French workers, the close relationship between party and confederation may not work to the CGT's advantage. The CGT's appeal among workers is not likely to increase if it is seen as selling out worker interests to benefit the political interests of the Communist party. Thus,

we believe the CGT's leadership is seeking with the approval of the party to mark more sharply its differences with government economic policies. [redacted]

The party, for its part, contends that its role in government is to promote and protect the interests of workers. To that end, it extracted some concessions from the Socialist majority in the March 1983 round of austerity decrees. At the same time, the party probably will continue to use the CGT, and the rich promise of labor unrest that it carries, as a means of gaining further concessions from the Socialist-led government on a range of domestic and foreign policy issues. [redacted]

On foreign policy issues, the CGT is willing to serve as a stalking-horse for the PCF in order to promote broader Communist objectives, even if this puts the union at odds with most of West European labor. The CGT's official stand on the outlawing of Solidarity and the declaration of martial law in Poland was to condemn Solidarity and suggest that the union was at fault for having strayed into "extremist" politics that threatened the state. In a similar vein, the confederation affirmed its party loyalty by disciplining CGT officials who denounced the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. [redacted]

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**The Communist Presence in Italian Labor**

In postwar Italy a reconstituted Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL) was quickly taken over by the Communists, who had gained a popular legitimacy through their wartime resistance activities. The CGIL's current claim to some 4.6 million members, even if somewhat inflated, puts it well ahead of the claimed membership of the Christian Democratic Confederazione Italiana Sindicale del Lavoro (CISL) with 2.6 million, and the socialist/lay Unione Italiana del Lavoro (UIL) with 1.3 million. Moreover, with some 40 percent of the Italian work force unionized—a high percentage for southern Europe—the CGIL's clout is even more significant (table 3).

Nonetheless, like its French counterpart, the CGIL's membership has decreased more than that of the other confederations in recent years.<sup>4</sup> This occurred in part because many workers were alienated by the emphasis that the Italian Communist Party (PCI)—anxious to participate in government—put on moderation in the late 1970s. The moderation strategy cost the CGIL some 100,000 members at the grassroots level from 1977 to 1979, according to political observers and US Embassy reporting. The decline of the manufacturing sector, a CGIL stronghold, has also eroded the membership rolls. Moreover, the CGIL, like the other Italian confederations, lost members because of disenchantment over organized labor's inability to deliver jobs and maintain workers' purchasing power in the face of continuing high inflation and low economic growth. This disenchantment has been reflected in at least one independent poll, as well as in press accounts by local and regional labor leaders. High unemployment and lack of interest in trade unionism among youth have also diminished traditional sources of new membership.

**Patterns of Influence.** The PCI does not dominate the CGIL as thoroughly as the French Communist Party dominates the CGT, but its influence is substantial. The rule by which the three principal Italian labor confederations are bound—that an officeholder in a labor confederation cannot at the same time hold

<sup>4</sup> [redacted] from 1977 through 1982 the CGIL lost more than 330,000 active members, in contrast to the CISL's loss of some 139,000. The UIL claimed a gain of more than 125,000 active members over the same period.

**Table 3**  
**The Italian Confederazione**  
**Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL)**

National standing ( <i>by size</i> )	Largest
Membership ( <i>persons</i> )	Approximately 4.6 million (about 45 to 50 percent of all unionized workers)
Influence of national Communist party on union	Moderate (by issue)
Congruence between party policy and union policy	Moderate (by issue)
Regions of notable strength	Piedmont-Lombardy-Liguria industrial triangle, Florence, Taranto, Mestre-Porta Marghera, Livorno
Sectors of dominance	Metalworking, chemicals, textiles, maritime/longshoring, automobiles, construction, agriculture, hotel/catering

office in a political party—has not been a serious impediment to the PCI. In fact, the non-Communist confederations have charged that Luciano Lama, the CGIL's General Secretary, is a de facto member of the PCI directorate, even though he resigned his PCI seat in parliament several years ago.

Below the General Secretary, the CGIL's leadership is dominated by party members who are not formally officeholders in the party. Press accounts estimate some 62 percent of CGIL officials are PCI members, in contrast to some 37 percent among the rank and file. Well over half of the members of the Executive Committee, the most important of the CGIL's four principal decisionmaking bodies, are Communists. Seven of the 12 members of the national Secretariat belong to the PCI, and roughly half of the larger Board of Directors and General Council are party members.

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### ***Soviet Influence in Italian Labor***

*The Italian CGIL, in contrast to the French CGT, maintains only token contacts with Soviet and East Bloc labor groups. Although the CGIL did not resign its membership in the World Federation of Trade Unions until 1978, it had been increasingly inactive in that forum since joining the United Federation in 1972 and the Brussels-based European Trade Union Confederation—as the first and only Communist member to date—in 1975. The CGIL refused an invitation to send an observer delegation to the WFTU's Havana Congress in 1982 because of the crackdown in Poland and the objections of CGIL socialists.*

But there are other factors that constrain PCI influence on the CGIL:

- The three main Italian labor confederations all belong to the United Federation, and the quest for a unified position on key labor issues in order to form a united collective bargaining front sometimes has led to a disparity in PCI and CGIL positions.
- Rank-and-file assertiveness throughout the 1970s on specific social and labor issues provided intense pressure from below that further constrained the CGIL leadership from dogmatic adherence to a PCI line.

- The growth in the last several years of the autonomous unions, which are politically unfettered and whose principal goal is bread-and-butter gains for their members, has been a source of keen competition for the CGIL and underscored the need for it to focus on labor issues rather than the political fortunes of the PCI.

With respect to party funding of the CGIL, any identifiable or overt aid stopped at the same time the confederation agreed that Communist labor officials would not simultaneously hold party office. We suspect, however, that some secret funding still passes from the PCI to the CGIL.

***Communist Union Policies.*** Although the views of the PCI and the CGIL are often congruent, the confederation has shown on several key issues over the last decade a willingness to disagree with party positions. The CGIL was moved in 1980, for example, to break ranks with the PCI whose endorsement of austerity measures and calls for wage moderation—intended to burnish its image as a responsible party—proved increasingly difficult for the Communist confederation to justify to its rank and file. Some workers had been pressing for wage increases greater than those counseled by leadership and some had sought de facto wage hikes by urging reclassification of existing jobs into more highly paid skill categories.

the CGIL's moderate Communist leadership was caught between its desire to maintain labor unity with—in this case—its more militant United Federation partners—and pressures to follow party discipline and support the PCI view. The leadership of the CGIL eventually rejoined the rest of the United Federation on this issue.

The CGIL also sided with its labor partners when a similar conflict between party and union arose surrounding the renegotiation in 1981 of the *scala mobile*, the automatic wage indexation mechanism that functions as a quarterly cost-of-living escalator. In that case, the majority of CGIL leaders believed

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with the rest of the United Federation that a more flexible negotiating stance would best serve labor while the PCI saw a strategy of no compromise as best. Although the CGIL initially went along with the PCI's strategy, the confederation subsequently adopted the United Federation position that some downward adjustment of the *scala mobile* was necessary to keep labor costs down and slow the growth of unemployment. In this case, the vacillation of the CGIL's leadership angered the confederation's socialist minority and the other United Federation members. [ ]

On foreign policy issues, the CGIL is more likely to toe the party line. For example, the confederation has joined the PCI in opposing "automatic" deployment of INF missiles at Comiso in the spring of 1984 and has tried, unsuccessfully, to push the United Federation toward this position. The suppression of Solidarity was denounced by both the PCI and CGIL, as well as by the entire United Federation. [ ]

#### The Communist Presence in Spanish Labor

Trade unionism in Spain under Franco consisted of government-sponsored syndicates. By allowing only officially approved groups to participate in the syndicates, the government sought to control labor and destroy the ability of Communists and other government opponents to influence labor policies. But Communist organizers formed clandestine Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), or Workers' Commissions, within the syndicates to serve as training and recruitment centers. The reputation the Communists gained as supporters of worker grievances served them well after the establishment of free trade unions in 1977. In the first factory delegate elections in 1978—called to determine which unions would engage in collective bargaining and take labor's seats on various government agency boards—the CCOO outperformed the Socialist-affiliated Union General de Trabajo (UGT) by nearly 13 percentage points (34.4 percent to the UGT's 21.7 percent; see table 4). [ ]

We believe the CCOO's initial success was primarily due to the Communists' superior organizational skills. The election's ballot system, which did not permit candidates to declare party or union affiliation, also inadvertently helped the CCOO by suppressing identification of its Socialist competitors and masking the Communist links of its own candidates. [ ]

**Table 4**  
**Spanish Factory**  
**Delegate Elections**

*Percentage share of votes  
among principal unions*

	1979	1980	1982
CCOO	34.4	30.8	33.4
UGT	21.7	29.2	36.7
USO (centrist union)	3.9	8.6	4.6
Other (unaffiliated, independent, and regional)	40.0	31.4	25.3

The CCOO's position slipped, however, in the factory delegate elections of 1980, when the Communist confederation edged out the UGT by only 30.8 percent to 29.2 percent. We believe that the CCOO's loss relative to the UGT was a function of better Socialist organization and disaffection arising from the Communist party's internal struggles. In the 1982 elections, the UGT surpassed the Communist unions, winning 36.7 percent of the factory delegate posts to the Communists' 33.4 percent (table 5). [ ]

The supplanting of the CCOO by the UGT as Spain's leading labor confederation may be due in part to the decline in membership and electoral support for the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) and the rise of the Socialist Party. Moreover, the CCOO continued to pursue radical strike actions at a time when most workers were concerned primarily with job security and purchasing power, not provocative actions aimed at employers or the government. Even so, the Communist confederation retains considerable influence and popularity among Spanish workers. In the 1982 factory delegate elections, the CCOO improved its share of total votes, even though the UGT captured a larger share. [ ]

**Patterns of Influence.** Although the Spanish Communist Party still basically calls the shots for the CCOO, there have been serious strains in the relationship. Prior to the open split between the PCE's Soviet and Eurocommunist factions in the late 1970s, the leadership of the party was identical with that of the

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**Table 5**  
**The Spanish Comisiones**  
**Obreras (CCOO)**

National standing (by size)	Second largest
Membership (persons)	Definitive information not available; estimates from 800,000 to 2 million, but some sources suggest up to 40 to 50 percent of the unionized work force
Influence of national Communist party on union	High
Congruence between party policy and union policy	High (with some dissent)
Regions of notable strength	Madrid, southeastern Castile, Barcelona, central Andalusia, southwestern Galicia
Sectors of dominance	Construction, metalworking, textiles

confederation. Many pro-Soviets were expelled from the PCE's leadership in the early and mid-1970s, but they remained on the CCOO's Executive Committee. This has been a source of friction between the two organizations ever since and has loosened their common bond.

In July 1982 the confederation took a further step to distance itself from the party when CCOO Secretary General Marcelino Camacho resigned his seat on the PCE. This move was apparently designed to prevent party factional disputes from spilling over and hurting the CCOO's performance in the 1982 election of factory delegates. In the short run, the declaration of independence seemed to make very little difference. The US Embassy reported that at a meeting of Communist trade union representatives and Socialist party leaders in September 1982, the role of the principal PCE representative on the CCOO's Executive Board eclipsed that of Camacho. Since then, there have been few additional signs that the confederation intends to pursue a more independent course.

**Communist Union Policies.** The Communist confederation's positions on economic and political issues generally mirror those of the party, but two factors

**Soviet Influence in Spanish Labor**

*Soviet influence in the Communist confederation has been and may continue to be a great concern to many Spanish Communist Party members. Although pro-Soviets constitute minorities in both the party and the CCOO, they have enjoyed an advantage in the confederation in the last four years because they are proportionately stronger in the union than in the party.*

*Press accounts in 1982 also reported that the leaders of the Madrid CCOO maintain close and regular contacts with the Soviet Embassy.*

have pushed CCOO leaders toward moderation: they have had their hands full holding the confederation together in the face of PCE factionalism, and they have not wanted to appear too ready to undermine the Socialist government, Spain's first government of the left since the Civil War. At the same time, pressures from the party and the need to respond to restive rank-and-file elements have pushed the confederation in a more militant direction. The result has been a certain schizophrenia in CCOO policies.

Early this year, for example, the CCOO ratified a national collective bargaining agreement providing for only modest wage increases, mainly to secure a role in the sectoral and regional negotiations where competition with the UGT is intense. More recently, however, the confederation's leadership denounced the agreement, charging that greater worker gains would have been possible had the socialist unions not been content

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to settle for less. Moreover, the CCOO has encouraged strikes like those in the metalworking sector and threatened to mount worker demonstrations in the event proposed changes making it easier to dismiss workers are implemented. [redacted]

There is less inconsistency in CCOO foreign policy positions. The confederation joins the PCE in opposing Spanish membership in NATO. In concert with the party, union leaders have mounted some protests against the presence of US bases in Spain. Such rallies generally have attracted limited attendance, suggesting participation only by hardline CCOO members. [redacted]

#### **The Communist Presence in Portuguese Labor**

Trade unionism in Portugal under the rightist regimes that held power before the 1974 revolution consisted, as in Spain, of official corporatist national syndicates that had a strictly limited economic role. In a strategy similar to that of the Spanish Communists, cadres of the then-illegal Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) successfully infiltrated the official syndical structure during a period of relative liberalization under the Caetano regime and founded the Communist-controlled Intersindical. Ironically, the Communists were able to secure leading roles and positions of influence in the new trade union entity in part because Portuguese socialists remained aloof, fearing that participation in the restructured syndicates would give state-controlled labor organs an undeserved respectability. [redacted]

The Communists subsequently seized control of the remaining government-run syndicates during the revolution of 1974 and, in alliance with the Marxist-leaning Armed Forces Movement, temporarily succeeded in pushing through a law in 1975 declaring the Intersindical the sole trade union confederation. When a new constitution repealed the law in 1976, Socialists and Social Democrats broke away and in 1978 formed the Uniao Geral dos Trabalhadores (UGT), ending the Communist monopoly in Portuguese trade unionism. The entrenched Communist forces were not easily dislodged, however, and the Confederacao Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses-Intersindical Nacional (CGTP-In)—as the Intersindical was renamed—currently claims membership in

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#### **Soviet Influences in Portuguese Labor**

*Of southern Europe's Communist unions, the Portuguese CGTP-In probably maintains the closest ties to and relies most heavily for funding on its Soviet and East European counterparts and parties. The Portuguese union receives heavy financial backing, according to US Embassy reports, from the government-controlled labor organizations of the East Bloc countries through their embassies in Lisbon. In one case, clandestine East European involvement in Portuguese labor affairs even resulted in the expulsion of the Czechoslovak Ambassador and another diplomat who, according to Portuguese authorities, helped plan the CGTP-In's unsuccessful general strike in early 1982.* [redacted]

*Although not formally affiliated with the Soviet-backed World Federation of Trade Unions, the CGTP-In was a "special honored guest" at the organization's Havana Congress in 1982. In addition, ranking Portuguese Communist union representatives in 1982 attended trade union congresses in East Berlin, Prague, Sofia, and Moscow. Whether such links include training or other nonmonetary aid, however, is not known. Although the CGTP-In signed an agreement with the Soviet trade union last year for "cooperation and support," the terms of the pact were not specified. Nonetheless we believe that, in addition to promoting "solidarity," the agreement extends more financial aid to the CGTP-In.* [redacted]

excess of 1.5 million. While we think a more realistic membership estimate may be 800,000 to 1 million, that still places the CGTP-In ahead of the Socialist and Social Democratic-linked UGT whose members, according to US Embassy estimates, number some 600,000 to 800,000 (table 6). [redacted]

**Patterns of Influence.** In Portugal, the decisionmaking bodies of the CGTP-In are strictly controlled by the Portuguese Communist Party. According to the US Embassy, the confederation's collective leadership is comprised of three party members who meet weekly

**Table 6**  
**The Portuguese Confederacao**  
**Geral dos Trabalhadores**  
**Portugueses-Intersindical Nacional**  
**(CGTP-In)**

National standing ( <i>by size</i> )	Largest
Membership ( <i>persons</i> )	Approximately 800,000 to 1 million, about 50 percent of all unionized workers (union claim of 1.5 million probably inflated)
Influence of national Communist party on union	Absolute
Congruence between party policy and union policy	Identical
Regions of notable strength	Lisbon, Setubal
Sectors of dominance	Transport, textiles, chemicals, metalworking, ceramics, shipbuilding

with PCP leader Alvaro Cunhal, the de facto head of the CGTP-In. Despite promises by confederation leaders at the national congress last March to implement changes permitting the several tiny, non-Communist minority factions a greater voice in shaping CGTP-In policies, the alterations were cosmetic. Although the confederation abolished its 33-member Secretariat and formed a new National Council, hardline Communists retained control of the principal executive body, and the overwhelmingly Communist membership of the old Secretariat moved virtually intact to the new council.

The Communist party also probably provides the bulk of the confederation's operating funds because the rank and file are a weak and uncertain base of financial support. Moreover, given the party's and Cunhal's close ties to Moscow and their likely reliance on Soviet financial assistance, we believe the CGTP-In at a minimum receives indirect Soviet funding through the PCP.

According to US Embassy reporting, the CGTP-In's leadership prefers to maintain a decentralized system of smaller, more dispersed unions, in keeping with the pre-1974 tradition of "divide and rule" in labor matters. Although this is in contrast to the centralized approaches of most south European Communist confederations, the CGTP-In finds that a system of

numerous geographically distinct, individual sector unions provides more patronage opportunities which, in turn, promote institutional loyalty.

The CGTP-In has also benefited from the disunity of the rival UGT trade confederation. The Socialist and Social Democratic constituencies that comprise the UGT have been at odds with each other for several years because one has had its party in government while the other's has been in opposition. Formation of a Socialist and Social Democratic coalition government in Lisbon this year may be conducive to greater harmony between the two factions. The CGTP-In's attack on the government's incomes policy and economic austerity steps could further unity in the UGT.

**Communist Union Policies.** There is virtually complete congruence between the policies of the Portuguese Communist Party and those of the Communist labor confederation. At its congress in March, the CGTP-In announced its opposition to the concept of a "social pact" among government, management, and labor, and demanded that the new government recognize the Communist confederation as the "sole and legitimate representative" of Portuguese workers. It also reiterated its opposition to Portugal's accession to the EC and called for cancellation of entry negotiations.

Although the CGTP-In usually has not hesitated to use conventional labor agitation tactics, it adopted more conservative tactics in the months preceding the Portuguese national election of last April in order to avoid jeopardizing Communist chances at the polls. Indeed, last March the most recent in a string of disruptive national railroad strikes called by independent, non-Communist unions over the issue of wage increases did not elicit CGTP-In support, according to press accounts, despite the union's earlier participation in similar actions. Now that the Socialists are in power, the CGTP-In has threatened to foment labor unrest against the government. In particular, it has vowed to fight the government's labor law reform effort, which includes a measure to permit industry to lay off workers during economic downturns.



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The CGTP-In regularly resorts to political agitation to promote particular PCP foreign policy objectives and increase Communist power and influence. According to US Embassy reports, the CGTP-In is currently promoting in Communist-dominated industries around Lisbon a "peace and disarmament" campaign that attacks deployment of US missiles in Western Europe. By denouncing deployment and emphasizing links between the Portuguese Government and the United States, the Communists hope to discredit and undermine the ruling coalition. Also in accordance with the party, the confederation approves of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and supports the outlawing of Solidarity and subsequent steps taken by the Jaruzelski regime. [redacted]

#### **The Communist Presence in Greek Labor**

In Greece, the system of government domination of trade unionism whereby only acceptable unions could belong to the officially sanctioned Geniki Syskepsis Ellinon Ergaton (GSEE) effectively excluded Communist participation in the collective bargaining process for several decades. Since restoration of democratic rule in 1974, however, the pro-Soviet Communist Party of the Exterior (KKE/EXT) has devoted the bulk of its funds and manpower to labor organizing. Under its direction the Communist Eniaia Syndikalistiki Andidiktatoriki Kinisi (ESAK) trade union confederation has made significant inroads in the labor movement, especially at the local level.<sup>5</sup> [redacted]

The Socialist victory in the national election of 1981 and the ensuing further liberalization of labor laws gave renewed impetus to Communist organizing efforts. A 1982 law permits all trade unions, including those barred by previous governments, to belong to labor confederations and regional labor centers.

[redacted] ESAK controlled about a quarter of the local unions, a fifth of the labor centers, and a seventh of the federations in Greece. Since then, Communist influence has probably increased. [redacted]

<sup>5</sup> The Greek Communist Party of the Interior (KKE/INT) is a minuscule "Eurocommunist" party with appeal among intellectuals and students. Its union arm is quite small, has little impact in labor affairs, and most often allies with the socialist PASKE labor confederation. [redacted]

[redacted] Key sectors that have come under the Communists' sway include maritime unions, construction workers, bank employees, public utility workers, and many of the professions such as journalism (table 7). [redacted]

**Patterns of Influence.** As in Portugal, the Communist ESAK confederation is tightly controlled by its parent Communist party. Most of its governing board members also occupy middle- and high-level posts in the KKE/EXT. There are occasional instances of rank-and-file disenchantment with party-imposed policies, but we are not aware of any major differences between the party and confederation leaderships or of instances when the confederation has defied the party. Instead, they have worked in tandem to expand Communist influence in labor with growing success. [redacted]

Despite their growing influence at the local and federation level, Communists thus far have been largely excluded from the decisionmaking process of the officially sanctioned GSEE, mainly because the majority system of voting has given them only a small number of seats in the ruling administrative council. The government's decision to switch to proportional representation in the mid-December labor elections almost certainly will lead to greater Communist representation on the GSEE's administrative council. [redacted]

**Communist Union Policies.** In Greece, ESAK for several years pursued a cautious labor policy—lest it provoke another military coup—and often found itself outflanked by the socialist labor unions. The Communists remained circumspect for over a year after the Socialists came to power in 1981, both to gauge the government's intentions toward them and to avoid charges of trying to compromise Greece's first leftist government. The government's continued exclusion of ESAK from any real voice in national decisionmaking, coupled with its adoption of an austerity program last year, prompted ESAK to take the offensive. It instigated a wave of strikes last winter and, along with conservative labor groups, denounced the key points of a national collective agreement for the industrial

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**Table 7**  
**The Greek Eniaia Syndikalistiki**  
**Andidiktatoriki Kinisi (ESAK)**

National standing ( <i>by size</i> )	Definitive information not available but may be second largest because of recent gains in key areas
Membership ( <i>persons</i> )	Information not available, but probably 100,000 to 200,000 (about 25 to 45 percent of all unionized workers)
Influence of national Communist party on union	Absolute
Congruence between party policy and union policy	Identical
Regions of notable strength	Athens, Piraeus, Salonika
Sectors of dominance	Construction, hospital workers, banking/accounting, maritime/longshoring, public utilities

sector. In an effort to preempt further Communist-inspired labor unrest, the government last June adopted a tough new law that sharply curtails the right of public-sector employees to strike by requiring that an absolute majority of union members must first approve a strike action by secret ballot. With its strike option in the important public sector effectively checkmated for now, ESAK is focusing its energies on increasing its share of labor posts in the yearend labor election. [redacted]

The KKE/EXT has not hesitated to use its influence on labor to promote Communist foreign policy goals. Over the last year, the party enlisted Greek workers in its stepped-up campaign against a new military bases agreement between Greece and the United States, as well as opposition to and harassment of existing US facilities and military personnel in Greece. Although the agreement was signed despite the effort, the KKE/EXT reportedly will continue to use ESAK and the base unions to pursue political as well as labor objectives. [redacted]

### ***Soviet Influences in Greek Labor***

*Like its Portuguese counterpart, the pro-Soviet Greek Communist Party and its ESAK labor affiliate rely heavily on Soviet financial assistance.* [redacted]

*Despite the abolition last year of state control over union finances, the Communist union is not likely to garner additional funds from membership dues, which are traditionally minimal and seldom collected. Instead, ESAK probably will continue to rely on Soviet financial assistance, although the extent and amount of such aid remains closely guarded.* [redacted]

### **Prospects for Growth and Continuing Influence**

We believe that Communist labor confederations in southern Europe will remain strong and in some cases dominant. Nonetheless, there are signs that the next few years will not be trouble free for them. [redacted]

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The Communist confederations in France and Italy are likely to retain their preeminence despite recent membership losses, partly by compensating for the erosion of their strength in manufacturing industries such as metalworking and textiles with a greater recruitment effort in the growing services sector. They are likely to become increasingly handicapped, however, by the relatively moderate positions they sometimes must adopt in response to Communist party political concerns. This is especially true of the French confederation, which is likely to come under growing rank-and-file pressure to abandon collaboration with the government. The Italian confederation is in a better position to limit its losses as long as the PCI remains in opposition, but the situation could change if the party entered the government and the CGIL felt the need at least to moderate its demands. [REDACTED]

The more youthful and dynamic Communist confederations in Spain, Portugal, and Greece probably will not experience a marked decline in membership any time soon. Membership in the Spanish and Portuguese unions appears to have leveled off, but the Greek union, which began with a smaller base, is likely to continue to make gains. Several factors will work in their favor: their ability to muster unrestrained opposition to sitting socialist governments burdened with unpopular economic policies, lingering popular perceptions of Communists as the staunchest opponents of earlier dictatorships, and the still incomplete employer acceptance of the legitimacy of trade unions. [REDACTED]

The Spanish, Portuguese, and Greek Governments, however, could fight back against the Communist confederations by reversing some of the recent permissive labor laws. [REDACTED]

The Communist parties undoubtedly will try to maintain a firm grip on the labor confederations, and this will be at best a mixed blessing for the unions. Their party ties will assure them of a sense of mission, access to party coffers, and party and Soviet Bloc training. At the same time, subservience to the party and emphasis on political over labor goals will be a stigma that will hurt their recruitment efforts. This is especially true of the Greek and Portuguese confederations, but it also applies to the French and Spanish. [REDACTED]

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Conflicts between militants and moderates in several of the Communist confederations may increase factionalism and further limit their influence. The French confederation is likely to experience growing tensions between those who want to pursue policies designed to advance Communist party political objectives and those who favor a more militant posture even if it leads to strains in the governing coalition. In Italy, the socialist minority in the CGIL may pose a challenge to the dominant position of the Communist majority, especially under a Socialist-led government. Although the Spanish CCOO has attempted to distance itself from the disputes that divide the PCE, the growing clashes between opposing factions in the union are likely to erode the leadership's authority and effectiveness. Only the tightly knit Portuguese and Greek confederations are likely to remain relatively immune to factionalism. [REDACTED]

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In terms of policies, we believe that the *French CGT* will continue to pursue a more moderate course than it would like as long as the PCF has a stake in government. The CGT's national leadership will be under growing pressure, however, to respond to worker discontent, especially as unemployment grows. More labor unrest in the industrial and public sectors is likely over the next few years and the CGT almost certainly will want to assert its primacy as the "defender" of worker interests. The CGT appears already to be posturing to salvage some of its damaged credibility in the public-sector wage discussions which probably will extend into January. The Communist chief of the national coal monopoly resigned in [REDACTED]

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November in an apparent effort to put distance between the PCF and CGT, on the one hand, and government plans to implement large-scale layoffs in the coal industry on the other. In the wake of the Socialist party congress, which reaffirmed the government's current direction, and the relatively poor showing for the Communists in the social security elections, the CGT leadership is seeking to mark more sharply its differences with government economic policies. [redacted]

The *Italian CGIL* faces a period of estrangement from its socialist and lay partners in the United Federation in the wake of its disruptive role in the rancorous *scala mobile* negotiations. A Communist failure to mollify those who perceive them as a divisive force in labor could affect their ability to garner worker support and even diminish their influence within labor circles. Although the CGIL gave qualified support for the Craxi premiership, the CGIL's Communist leadership has expressed displeasure at the government's intention to give priority to combating inflation over creating new jobs, and the confederation is likely to become more combative as economic conditions improve. [redacted]

*Spain's CCOO* has already escalated its criticism of Socialist economic policies and accuses the UGT, as the labor partner of the PSOE, of subservience to the government. Such tactics may gain greater resonance if the economy begins to recover and the government is slow to move away from its austerity program. To generate more support for its aims, the CCOO is calling for a 10-percent wage increase for workers in 1984. [redacted]

The *Portuguese CGTP-In* is also becoming a more contentious labor and political force. The party is encouraging strikes and threatens greater labor unrest in order to gain concessions from the Socialist-led government and to bolster the PCP's image as a party of influence. The key provision of the Soares government's effort to revitalize Portuguese industry and the economy overall is to give enterprises more latitude in laying off employees during periods of economic downturn. Opposition to the government's plans for reform of Portugal's labor laws reportedly will be the centerpiece of the CGTP-In's mobilization campaign. [redacted]

In Greece, *ESAK* will continue its efforts to exploit worker grievances over rising unemployment, eroding purchasing power, and the government's economic policies. Although the government reportedly has managed to extract a temporary agreement from the KKE/EXT to contain labor unrest, this may not be sufficient to stave off more widespread expressions of labor discontent like the demonstration in December 1982 protesting the government's restrictive 1983 incomes policy and those last spring protesting restrictions on strike activity. [redacted]

The Communist labor confederations of southern Europe, in our judgment, will remain influential. Indeed, they have shown tenacity and durability through previous periods of eclipse, as in France and Italy, and enforced clandestinity, as in Spain, Portugal, and Greece. Whether the Communist unions retain the support of a plurality of the organized labor force, however, depends on their adroitness in exploiting economic and political factors. An improvement in economic conditions could strengthen Communist unions if workers feel an increased sense of job security and show widespread, renewed interest in militant industrial strategies to recover lost purchasing power and redress recent declines in real wages. Communist labor confederations could also benefit from the reluctance of socialist unions to abandon the benign moderation they have shown toward the rigorous policies of governing socialist parties. [redacted]

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